

Official opening of the Belvédère Building

23 April 2025

A key step towards the New Princess Grace Hospital

A new building housing two hospital departments was officially opened by H.S.H. Prince Albert II at the Princess Grace Hospital on Wednesday 23 April. Construction on the Belvédère Building began in 2023. This is the first temporary relocation as part of the broader New Princess Grace Hospital project.

The Blood Transfusion Centre and the Anatomical Pathology Department will move into the building until completion of the project, scheduled for 2032, so that the Princess Charlotte Building can be demolished.

The new, modern structure was built using prefabricated elements. In addition to enabling improved schedule management, these techniques helped to reduce disruption to a minimum for patients, staff and local residents on Avenue Pasteur. Conceived by the architectural firm NMI, the innovative, modular wooden building was designed and built by a Monegasque consortium (PROBAT – EMC) in a dense and particularly restrictive hospital environment. It incorporates the highest quality and sustainability standards as well as meeting the technical requirements of a hospital.

Located on the South Promenade, between the Tamaris and Louis II buildings, the Belvédère Building offers 1,300 m² spread over five levels. The two lower floors are home to the Blood Transfusion Centre, including spaces for welcoming donors, donating blood, processing blood bags and delivering them to hospital departments. The upper two floors house the Anatomical Pathology Laboratory. This is a specialist department that is little known by the public, but is nonetheless vital for tissue analysis and cancer detection.

The delivery of these new spaces will enable Princess Grace Hospital to expand its healthcare provision to include molecular biology, an area that is now essential in treating cancer. The department will now have access to a fully automated molecular diagnostic platform that will speed up cancer typing.

Princess Grace Hospital now equipped to offer molecular biology services

Often invisible to the general public, anatomical pathology, a medical speciality focused on studying biological cell and tissue samples, nonetheless plays a key role in diagnosing disease, using macroscopic and microscopic analysis. This is the department that analyses biopsies to detect cancer.

With an increase in activity and transition to a digital platform in 2023, all that was needed was a new setting to enable the roll out of new molecular biology analysis techniques.

New molecular biology equipment for cancer typing

As part of its focus on innovation and constantly improving patient treatment, the Department has procured a next-generation system: the automated, rapid-assessment molecular diagnostic platform Idylla.

The platform improves the quality of care by offering reduced waiting times: thanks to this technology, it is now possible to receive initial partial typing of samples from tumours in under three hours. Previously, this took several days, as samples had to be sent to various platforms in France.

In addition to faster diagnosis, it also enables easier and smoother access to vital medical expertise, while significantly improving response times. As a result, doctors will be able to initiate the most appropriate treatments more quickly, benefiting all patients at Princess Grace Hospital. This almost immediate analysis helps to guide diagnosis more effectively and, in some cases, allows patients to begin treatment earlier, while waiting for full typing to be carried out. Princess Grace Hospital will continue to outsource the latter work to more specialised platforms.

The new equipment marks an important stage in the modernisation of diagnostic tools for cancer patients, particularly in the treatment of lung, breast, brain and colorectal cancers, and melanoma.



Key features

- Fully automated: from sample preparation to results analysis, the process is fully automated, reducing the risk of human error and improving the efficiency of results.

- Fast results: results are delivered in around three hours, enabling faster clinical decision-making.
- Versatile: Idylla offers a range of tests for a variety of oncology and research applications, covering mutations in multiple genes.

The procurement of this system is part of a broader strategy: back in 2011, the Princess Grace Hospital management team set out its intention to establish a molecular biology laboratory as part of the New Hospital programme. While awaiting full delivery of the premises, Princess Grace Hospital continues to pursue a policy based on partnerships with specialist analysis platforms, training – two oncogeneticists have qualified – and cooperation with Nice University Hospital.

Princess Grace Hospital Blood Transfusion Centre renamed “Donation House”: a new setting for a vital act

The Princess Grace Hospital Blood Transfusion Centre organises all whole blood collection operations in the Principality. It processes the blood collected and delivers blood bags for all patients treated in Monaco.

Donating blood is a vital act of solidarity. It saves lives by supplying blood for people who are injured, during surgery, medical treatment and other medical emergencies. Blood donations help to maintain the stocks required to meet patient needs.

As is the case in most Western countries, however, the Principality of Monaco does not collect sufficient blood for its needs. This creates considerable ethical, medical and economic challenges.

Princess Grace Hospital has therefore long undertaken campaigns and other activities to promote blood donation and attract donors.

The opening of *Donation House* in the Belvédère Building provides a completely redesigned space where donors can be welcomed in a warm, calming setting that is conducive to conviviality and solidarity.

Social events at Donation House

Donation House is becoming a place for donors to gather and spend time as they engage in this act of solidarity that is essential to treating many patients. In addition to the quality of the welcome offered to donors on an everyday basis, special social events help to make collection sites more attractive and provide an opportunity to promote blood donation in a more appealing way than simply delivering the simple, albeit essential, reminder of the need to “save lives”.

The centre will work with various departments at Princess Grace Hospital or with partner companies to organise themed days, respecting the core ethical principles of blood donation.

Starting in June, an Open Doors Day will give the general public a chance to gain a better understanding of what happens to blood bags, and the different circumstances in which transfusion is used. The relevance of medical procedures and the work carried out at Princess Grace Hospital to conserve this precious resource will also be discussed.